

Cooperation in Research and Development: Where and how to Apply for Funding Successfully?

On 12 and 13 June 2009 the first International Funding Forum (IFF) will take place at the Technopark Zurich in Switzerland. Researchers, donors and industry specialists from across Europe will come together and will receive first hand information about the known and new sources of funding available for all stages from basic research to corporate finance of start-up or spin-off companies. They also receive intensive courses on the main aspects of research management.

The importance of research and development, particularly for us in the West, is shown by the following facts: The price war a few decades ago has prompted the companies to relocate their production to countries with lower wages. Inevitably, know-how was transferred too and in the meantime the low-wage countries are making use of this know-how themselves. Parallel to the Western industrialized countries, they have built up their own industry sector structure. The Western companies have earned a lot in the short to medium term. But for our own markets we created new competitors. Only one chance remains: Leadership through more and faster innovation.

Research and development (R&D) is the engine for innovation. It is an important source of new products, new markets, jobs and income for the economy. R&D secures on long term the European economy, our prosperity and last but not least, peace. Many successful companies have understood this and invest a significant portion of their profits in R&D. Similarly, European states provide growing budgets (although still low compared to the U.S.) for national and international research funding through numerous programs. This diversity of available funding for the financing of R&D is gratifying. Less gratifying is the fact that the programs are continually changing and developing, making it almost impossible for the wider target group, the universities and companies, to obtain an overview of the different funding sources. Even less encouraging are the usually very complicated administrative hurdles in the process of applying for funding. Dynamic young entrepreneurs and individual researchers without external support are usually lacking the human resources to tackle these complicated application procedures.

The following questions must be answered in the run-up to an application for funding: Who is the right sponsor? What are the conditions for applying? How time consuming is the application process? What amount of money will be offered in the case of a successful application? What is the chance of success? Who are the right persons to provide support with the application?

The answers to these questions will be provided to researchers, developers and companies for the first time in a coherent form at the first International Funding Forum (IFF) at the Technopark Zurich on 12/13 June 2009. Instead of spending much time by visiting several individual events or collecting all the information from the different sources, the interested person will get to know all the details on the spot at first hand. The conference will be conducted in English. It is aimed particularly at researchers and developers who wish to have an overview of their financing options and incorporate this knowledge into their financial planning. Typical examples of different target groups are:

- Researchers: Sue Schmidt and Peter Haltiner will soon finish their Ph.D. theses. They are ambitious and both want to continue their research careers. They are aware that they will need to obtain third-party funding. On IFF they inform themselves specifically about appropriate grants and funding contributions for future projects.
- Entrepreneurs and research directors: Prof. Jane Westermann heads a laboratory of medical technology since 2007 and a spin-off company from the same laboratories, manufacturing and selling miniature analytical devices for infectious diseases. She is looking for investors of an amount of about 10 million Euros for the first growth phase of the company. She is participating at IFF because she wants to know where to find the right investors and what they will expect from the company.
- Multipliers: Judith Brooks is a Research Manager. As a competent consultant she visits IFF to update herself on new funding initiatives. In addition, she considers it as a benefit to learn more about the protection of intellectual property and about the procedure for patent submissions.
- Founders of research-intensive SMEs: Yannick Weiss and Claudia Grob have loused up their first corporate project in 2006. Too late they became aware of funding initiatives. And too little they knew about the interests of capital providers. They take part in the IFF in order to start their new company in 2010 with an improved financial planning

On the first day of the conference, the national and international programs will be presented. To find the suitable program in the diversity of all the programs is a big challenge for many researchers. Therefore, experts at the stands of the "Science Market" are available as contact points for the participants. Direct dialogue often is helpful to obtain a better orientation in the jungle of funding contributions and investment funds. Targeted networking is also promoted by making appointments with the experts, investors, or potential future research partners through an electronic partner-marketplace.

The second day will be devoted to practice. The best national and international trainers will instruct the researchers how to increase their chances of success in applying for research funding. Each participant can choose two courses from the following selection of topics:

- Step by step: Application for national or international funding (EU-Framework, CTI, National Science Foundation)
- Protection of intellectual property
- Project management for research
- Financial management for research
- Intensive training for people from the private sector, seeking capital

The idea for an international forum for funding is based on years of experience in advising companies and universities. The cooperation with seven strong private-sector organizations under the EU Framework Program for Research and Development underscores the international dimension of the Funding Forum (Project KAPPA-Health, www.kappa-health.org). The Forum is organised by eurelations AG, the KAPPA-Health Partners (see group picture) and CBS Congress & Business Services.

More information and registration at: www.fundingforum.eu

Funding Forum is organised by eurelations

Eurelations fosters R&D-cooperation, -relations and -projects in Europe. The company is specialised on public funding for Research and Development (R&D), education and business. We support private companies, universities and scientists as well as other organisations with respect to their participation in publicly funded programs, e.g. 7th Framework Program for Research and Technological Development of the European Union (FP7).

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Images

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